INTRODUCTION

The first business of every new Parliament is the election of a Speaker, since without a Speaker the House cannot carry on its business. In Alberta, the ritual of selecting a Speaker has remained the same since entering Confederation in 1905. Although it is quite correct to refer to the present selection process as an election, it is more commonly regarded as an appointment.

Immediately following an election on the first day of session and in accordance with the Royal Proclamation, newly assembled members are summoned to the Chamber to participate in the election of a Speaker. As is customary, the Premier makes a short speech on the importance of the speakership and then announces his nomination for the Chair. The Leader of the Official Opposition is then asked to approve the Premier's choice. In actuality, however, the decision has already been made prior to the House being called to order since the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition have already met and discussed the Premier's choice for Speaker. Therefore, the Leader of the Official Opposition's endorsement of the Premier's nomination in the Chamber is considered a formality and a traditionary practice. (In the forum of Canadian politics, only one exception of this tradition exists and that was when Prime Minister Trudeau chose James Jerome to be Speaker without first consulting the Leader of the Opposition, Robert Stanfield.) If no additional nominations are offered by the members to the Clerk, the nominated Speaker is elected. In accordance with tradition, the newly proclaimed Speaker shows reluctance to take his place in the chair. With the assistance of the Premier and some of his colleagues, he is then dragged towards the distinguished seat at the front of the Chamber.

The intent of this paper is to provide a window of insight into the viewpoints, past and present, of two highly respected past Speakers of the Legislature Assembly of Alberta: **Mr. Arthur Dixon** and **Mr. Gerard Amerongen.** As is all too common, individuals often earn a sound reputation and great respect while holding office but once they depart public office little is heard of them again. Expressed in their own words, achieved through personal interview, this paper strives to familiarize the reader with issues and experiences of both men when they served as the Speaker of the Alberta Legislature. It will not only document their recollections but also reveal that underneath the black silk robe and black tricorn hat exists a human being striving to fulfil his job to the best of his abilities.

ARTHUR JOHNSON DIXON

SEVENTH SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATURE: 1963 - 1972

Arthur Johnson Dixon was born at Windlestone, County of Durham, England in 1919, and with his parents emigrated to Canada in 1928, ultimately settling in the Calgary area. After attending school, Dixon joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940 where he served until 1946. He was a candidate in the federal election in 1949 and the 1951 by-election. In the provincial general election of 1952, he ran successfully as a candidate of the Social Credit Party and served as one of six members representing the City of Calgary in a sixty member House. He was re-elected in 1955, 1959, 1963 and 1967. He was elected as Deputy Speaker in 1955. In the election of 1963, which would later see Premier Ernest Manning nominate him Speaker for the first time, Dixon defeated his nearest competitor in Calgary-South by over three thousand votes. He was re-elected Speaker on February 13, 1964. In the 1967 election which would see Dixon resume the position of Speaker for the third consecutive term, he narrowly defeated his nearest competitor in Calgary-South, Joe Clark, by fewer than 500 votes. His last election success was in the 1971 general election when he represented the constituency of Calgary-Millican. By this time the House consisted of 75 members, fifteen more members than when Dixon had first been elected in 1952. He served in the Alberta Legislature representing Calgary for a total of twenty-three years.

During his term as Speaker from 1963 until 1972, he viewed his role as being the "servant of the House"[1] or an "expediter" of the business of the House. He considered himself to be the members' servant rather than their master. "It is up to the Members how the House is to be run." The members could make it "an easy House or an unruly House, it is really up to them." He chose to conduct the House in such a manner that the business of the House could be done as efficiently as possible while assuring that every member was given the opportunity to be heard. He thought the role resembled that of a manager rather than that of a judge or referee. Although he says that at times he wished that he had a "whistle" or the authority to assign thirty days, he felt his duty was to administer the rules rather than to make the rules.

Dixon acknowledged that the climate of the House seems to change with the size of the opposition. During Dixon's first term as Speaker, the Social Credit government held sixty seats, the Liberals two and the Coalition party one. In

the general election of 1967, the Social Credit Party continued to dominate with fifty-five seats, the Progressive Conservatives six, Liberals three, and the Independents with one seat. In Dixon's opinion a small opposition "doesn't make for a good House" because the Speaker may have a tendency to try to compensate for there being only three of four of them. On occasion, with the approval of the House, Dixon, relaxed certain Standing Orders of the House temporarily so that "democracy could be carried out". For example, should a member from the opposition want to speak for an extra ten to twenty minutes in debate or need a seconder, he would extend the allotted speaking time or allow debate to proceed without a seconder so that the member of the opposition would not be stymied.

For any Speaker, whether it be in Westminster, Canberra, Ottawa or Edmonton, the most important criterion associated with the position is that it be respected for being impartial in his service of the House. Often this means that the Speaker "must deliberately isolate himself from much of the camaraderie of the House and friendships which had developed over the years".[2] For many members who move from the backbench to the Speakers' chair this signifies a dramatic change in their lifestyle and a difficult transition. However, Dixon did not subscribe to this traditional approach. His method for maintaining his impartiality was to be friendly and accessible to both sides of the House. He socialized with both sides of the House and encouraged all members to visit him in his office. Many members felt comfortable approaching him in order to discuss personal problems, such as the reasons why they would not be in the House that day.

As an election approaches, the mood of the House becomes increasingly difficult to anticipate and it naturally becomes more politically active. In order to gain publicity, some members have been accused of acting in such a way that the Speaker could possibly name and expel the member from the chamber. Dixon explained emphatically that he "fought to the bitter end to try to avoid naming members at all costs". Throughout his eight years as Speaker, he never once expelled a member from the Chamber.

However, the waters were not always calm during Dixon's term as Speaker. "His worst moment came on a Friday afternoon during a bitter dispute between Opposition Leader Peter Lougheed and Health Minister Jim Henderson".[3] The issue involved a petition from Mr. Noel McKay, a trapper from Fort Chipewyan who complained that the W.A.C. Bennett Dam adversely affected the livelihood of many residents, himself included, on the Peace-

Athabasca delta. Health Minister Jim Henderson, who was also the government's spokesman on the Bennett Dam controversy, had explained to the legislature on February 15, 1971, that this "had long been an economically depressed area".[4] Mr. Henderson accused Mr. Lougheed of politicking when he presented Mr. McKay's petition. In response, Mr. Henderson disclosed to the House Mr. McKay's confidential welfare and employment records. Originally, Speaker Dixon ruled both Mr. Lougheed's and Mr. Henderson's statement out of order. He later reversed both decisions. Consequently, "lack of confidence in the Speaker was expressed first by the government and the majority of its back-bench supporters and then by Opposition Leader Peter Lougheed".[5] The opposition accused the Speaker of being influenced by the government, therefore, his ability to remain impartial was being called into question. Government members were put in a very serious position because if they failed to support their cabinet colleague, he would have no other recourse but to resign. "But by supporting him, they would automatically have to sacrifice another colleague, the able and highly respected Speaker of the legislature, the Honourable Mr. Dixon." [6] Up until this incident the session had been considered "extremely dull" [7], now the temperature of the House was hot and emotions volatile. A veteran Socred, Alf Hooke even threatened to cross the floor of the House if the Socreds would not back their Speaker. Mr. Dixon waited until the following Monday to ask the legislature to "remove all doubt over his integrity"[8]. An unanimous vote of confidence was passed and the honourable Speaker of the Assembly assumed his rightful place before the Assembly. Premier Strom redirected both allegations in question to a twenty-five member committee on privileges.

Dixon continued as Speaker until the August 1971 election. He won his seat in Calgary-Millican despite a change in government by Peter Lougheed's Progressive Conservatives. The Social Credit Party which had enjoyed thirty-six years as government had now become the official opposition. Arthur Dixon remained in public life until 1975 when Tom Donnelly and the Progressive Conservatives celebrated a landslide victory which saw the Conservative numbers escalate to sixty-nine and the Social Credit's numbers dwindle to four. Dixon returned to business life in Calgary, however, he is quick to say that he enjoyed his many years representing Calgary and its people in the legislature. He has great respect for the members of every party who serve their fellow Albertans in the legislature.

GERARD JOSEPH AMERONGEN

EIGHTH SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATURE: 1972 - 1986

Gerard Joseph Amerongen was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1914. He studied at Regina, Saskatoon and Humbolt before graduating in law from the University of Alberta. He was called to the Alberta Bar in 1946 and became a Q.C. in 1967. He achieved the rank of lieutenant in the Canadian Army. Amerongen had run for public office in the general elections of 1955, 1959, 1963 and 1967, but was defeated. Beginning in 1971, he won four consecutive elections for the Progressive Conservatives. In 1971, he defeated his nearest opponent, Socred Alexander Romaniuk, by over 2,500 votes in the constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark. He was extremely popular with his electorate and this was evident by the overwhelming victories he achieved: 1975 (by 5,309 votes), 1979 (by 4,977 votes) and 1982 (by 6,227 votes). In 1972, the newly elected Premier Lougheed selected him as Speaker of the Legislature where he remained until his defeat in the general election of 1986.

Even though he had never served as a backbencher, Premier Lougheed considered Amerongen to be an easy choice for Speaker. Amerongen "had legal training, he had more maturity than most of the relative youngsters who were forming government, he had bearing and poise, and he was an independent thinker".[9] Shortly after the election in 1971, Lougheed mentioned to Amerongen his intentions of nominating him as Speaker. Lougheed would have to get the approval of Opposition Leader Harry Strom but urged Amerongen to reacquaint himself with Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice and Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. Amerongen confesses now that he had had "no intention to be anything but a backbencher and continue with my private law practice."[10]

Amerongen equated the role of a Speaker to that of a referee. Since for the most part a referee is an arbiter, best described as someone who "applies the rules to make sure that the game goes on properly." When asked to list qualities he considered essential for a successful Speaker, he recommended "a thick hide to take criticism, especially from the media, without attempting to defend yourself publicly; above all, a good sense of humour."[11] Amerongen had several opportunities to demonstrate his dry humour with the late Charles Drain, a Social Credit member from Pincher Creek - Crowsnest, known for his sense of humour, poetic wit, and a tendency to exhaust a topic. One

afternoon, recognizing that Charles Drain was speaking off topic, Amerongen, who believed in letting members' speak, decided to intervene by saying to the House, "I regret having to interrupt the Honourable Member but the Chair is having increasing difficulty in relating the Honourable Member's remarks to the topic under discussion." To the surprise of the House, Mr. Drain piped up "You know Mr. Speaker, I'm having the same trouble myself!" According to Amerongen, Mr. Drain's reply "fractured the House". Not only is a sense of humour beneficial in adding a sense of lightness, it is also a vital tool for reducing the temperature when emotions begin to rise in the House.

While Amerongen sat in the Speaker's chair, he dealt with both large and nominal sized opposition parties. The largest opposition existed during his first term when the Conservative government held 49 of the 75 available seats with the Social Credit party being the Official Opposition. In the next three elections the Chamber was drastically unbalanced since the Progressive Conservatives comprised 69 of 75 seats in 1975, 74 of 79 seats in 1979 and 75 of 79 seats in 1982. In 1982 the New Democratic Party took over the title of the Official Opposition from the Socreds which failed to elect any members. Amerongen did not grant a small opposition any special privileges or leverage, in his opinion a "small opposition is the judgement of the electorate and not the Speaker's responsibility to correct what the voters decided. Only an election could change this and that would be up to the voters." For when Amerongen gazed upon the Chamber from the Speaker's chair, he did not simply see seventy-four fellow elected members, he also saw the faces of all Albertans who were represented by the elected member. In order that no Albertan would be privileged over another, he applied the same rules to all members regardless of political stripe or the size of the group in which he belonged.

A concern of many members who are selected to be Speaker is their ability to represent their constituents from the Chair. Amerongen did not consider the Speakership to present a hindrance to his M.L.A. responsibilities. He utilized extensive mailing lists in order to inform his constituents on the affairs of their government. In order to preserve his neutrality, he never attended caucus meetings, although he did attend committee meetings in order to fulfil his commitment to his constituents. Rather than using Question Period and debate as an opportunity to address issues involving his constituency, he would contact cabinet ministers directly to deal with business.

The Speaker's role has been described as encompassing "three distinct

categories - ceremonial, judicial and administrative".[12] As Speaker, Amerongen considered it important to maintain and promote the dignity associated with the office. To his credit, he changed the inauguration process from the Speaker entering the chamber alone through a side door to a more formal procession which enters the Assembly through the main doors. In addition, he added a touch of ceremony to the path of the daily procession. On days allotted to the government by Standing Orders, the Speaker procession would pass on the government side of the Clerk's table. On days assigned to opposition business, the Speaker procession would pass on the opposition side of the Clerk's table. In accordance with the ceremonial tasks associated with the position of speaker, Amerongen was obliged to meet with many visiting dignitaries. Amerongen, who exudes a natural aptitude for languages, was renowned for greeting dignitaries in their own language. He would prepare weeks ahead by seeking out personal tutors so that he could perfect his accent! Even members of the press gallery acknowledged that Amerongen appeared to like adding his own personal flair to the job, Harry Midgley, an Edmonton Journal reporter, wrote that his linguistic ability was "indicative of his instinct for courtesy and friendliness, and of his stylish expertise and capacity for taking pains." [13]

Although he enjoyed the ceremonial element associated with the position, he agreed that the most consuming element is the judicial role, since making judgements is the duty of the Speaker. In the Order of Precedence in Alberta, the Speaker ranks fourth after the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier and the Chief Justice. When he first became Speaker in 1972, members were able to appeal the Speakers ruling "forthwith and on the spot". In 1973, Amerongen participated in a special committee which changed the standing orders so that the members would have to submit a notice of motion on the order paper. Once a notice of motion had been filed, the Speaker's ruling could be debated and voted upon in the House. The change in the Standing Orders enabled the business of the House to continue and allowed hot tempers with time to cool.

Standing Order 6 requires that "Mr. Speaker shall offer prayers every day at the meeting of the Assembly before any business is entered upon." [14] Amerongen's prayers were a radical departure from past prayers since he decided to remove all references to Christianity for the two members at the time who followed other faiths. Amerongen believed that he did not have a right to impose his Christian beliefs on the House by method of Standing Orders. As a result, he eliminated the Lords Prayer and any other references to Christ and substituted a prayer which spoke directly with God and referred

specifically to the duties and obligations of being a member in the provincial legislature.

In his fourteen years as Speaker, he faced many difficult decisions but the most difficult decision he had to make occurred in March 1983, when he had to recognize which party would be the official opposition. In the general election of 1982, the Progressive Conservatives elected 75 members, the Alberta New Democratic Party elected 2 members, and two Independents were elected. The Independents, Ray Speaker and Walter Buck, emphasized that the decision must be made on the basis of incumbency and continuity. Their strongest argument asserted that Ray Speaker had been the Leader of the Opposition in the previous legislature making him an incumbent and the obvious and only choice. In addition, the two Independent members declared that they would work as a team. The New Democratic Party (NDP) members, Grant Notley and Ray Martin, based their argument on the fact that designation should go to the group whose members belonged to the same party. Amerongen searched ardently for a precedent but was unsuccessful in finding precedents in any of the other parliaments in the Commonwealth. Under such circumstances, it was possible that the official opposition would not be designated. However, Amerongen found it necessary to make a designation. Upon carefully considering all arguments, Amerongen recognized NDP member, Grant Notley, as the Leader of the Official Opposition, "at least for the time being in this 20th Legislative Assembly".[15] Amerongen noted that if a significant change of circumstances took place giving the Independents numerical superiority the present designation would be reconsidered and probably changed.

Amerongen considered his role of Speaker to be "servant of the servants of the people". The most important thing was to serve the members and through them the constituents who put them in office would be served. For a Speaker, a basic essential to operating the House successfully is respect. Amerongen believed that a person must give respect before one should expect to be given it in return. This belief must be extended to include even those members who persist in acting out of order. Convincing a member to withdraw a statement can be one of the greatest challenges for a Speaker. In 1973, the Standing Orders were changed so that the Speaker had the authority to expel a member for the remainder of the sitting. Initially, Amerongen had thought that he would use this rule in situations where a member persisted in being out of order and refused to retract his improper statement. However, Amerongen was able to avoid expelling a member by following the precedent set by federal

Speaker Lucien Lamoureux. In a situation where a member had called a Minister a liar, Lamoureaux opted to speak to that select member respectfully for an extended period of time until the member agreed to offer a withdrawal considered acceptable to the speaker. Amerongen was very impressed and decided to adopt this style in order to prevent expelling a member. Amerongen did not consider expelling a member to be a good option towards the constituents whom the member represented. In his opinion, the constituents had the right to have their member sit in the House and represent them and Amerongen did not want to deprive them of this even for a short time. In his fourteen years as Speaker, although he was challenged on three occasions, he never once expelled a member from the Chamber.

Among his contributions to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Amerongen established the first intern program in Alberta for university graduates who want to learn more about the political process. Premier Lougheed's promise of a Hansard and television as a permanent practice were also introduced during Amerongen's term.

Amerongen remained in the Speakers' chair until the 1986 election when newcomer liberal Grant Mitchell experienced an unexpected victory. Mitchell's victory came as a great surprise to both Amerongen and his supporters, since during the campaign while he was door knocking, the seasoned veteran was often told that he need "not campaign at all". Taking Amerongen's 1982 results into account, this was quite conceivable since he had the highest vote count in Edmonton. However, in 1986 the Alberta's political climate had changed with the Conservatives losing fifteen seats. Gerard "Gerry" Amerongen now faced the difficult transition out of public life.

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER

For most of Alberta's history and for the majority of the period both Dixon and Amerongen were Speakers, the legislature was a one-party dominated House. However, the past two elections in 1986 and 1989 have produced larger opposition parties causing the House to often be divided along partisan lines. More than ever before, the Speaker needs to be seen as non-partisan as possible so that he can gain the confidence of all the parties. As a consequence, the task of the Speaker to maintain dignity and order in the legislature is becoming increasingly difficult. The present system of selecting a speaker by nomination is continually under criticism by the opposition who have proposed replacing the current system, as has been done federally, with an election involving a secret ballot. The secret ballot system would enable members to get actively involved in the selection process since they would participate in both the nomination and voting process.

Both Dixon and Amerongen offered their opinion concerning a secret ballot selection process. Dixon believed that criticisms are inevitable in such a position. It really does not matter how the person is selected, "people will still question decisions, this comes with the territory!" Dixon considered the secret ballot system to be really an appointment, since the Premier could intervene by exercising influence upon the government members choice for Speaker. In such a case, the election would only be an election in the eyes of the public. In Alberta, the Speaker has always been a government member although no stipulation exists which states that the Speaker must be from the majority. Dixon proposed that the Speaker be chosen from the Opposition which should definitely suppress any criticisms concerning partiality from the opposition.

Amerongen considers the secret ballot system to be an improvement over the present system. In the eyes of the public the legitimacy of the position would be increased which would be a definite advantage in itself. "The Speaker has to be impartial and be seen as being impartial. If this helps him to be seen impartial all to the good."

Premier Getty has recently established a Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform. This nine member, all party task force, intends "to review ways of making it (Legislative Assembly) more responsive to the needs and values of the citizens of Alberta".[16] It will report back on its deliberations and may suggest recommendations for change. The election of a Speaker is only one area which the Committee is expected to examine.

Some legislators believe that an election by secret ballot will silence many of the criticisms and complaints voiced by the opposition parties about the speakership. After all, members would then be responsible for choosing their own presiding officer and if the Speaker now makes a "serious mistake he can be called to account by those who elected him rather than propped up by the government that nominated him."[17]

CONCLUSION

Although the job description is the same for each individual selected to be Speaker, the manner in which they choose to serve the House often varies significantly. Mr. Dixon and Mr. Amerongen were both well respected Speakers, however, both men operated the Chamber very differently. Two key factors seem to determine the manner in which a Speaker chooses to operate the House, namely, the personality of the Speaker and composition of the Chamber.

Mr. Dixon's eight years in the Speaker's chair was characterized by large Social Credit governments. He attended caucus meetings and was the last Speaker to reside full-time in the Speakers' Suite where he enjoyed entertaining dignitaries and members from both sides of the House. He believed in managing the Chamber with comfortable reigns.

The majority of Mr. Amerongen's fourteen years in the Speaker's chair were characterized by substantial Conservative governments. He removed himself from all partisan activity, including caucus meetings, in order to maintain his impartiality. He believed in managing the Chamber with a firm but fair hand.

The demands placed on every elected member are high considering the time expended attending community functions, answering constituency concerns and acquainting themselves on a wide range of information. However, these demands are even intensified for the member appointed to the position of Speaker. Instantly, this select person is expected to assume many hats, not only the black tricorn hat which is part of the Speaker's regalia, but also the hat of a referee, judge, and umpire. **This may be a lot to demand of any one person.**

APPENDIX A

POEM COMMEMORATING MR. DIXON'S TERM AS SPEAKER

Thursday, May 16, 1974

On the occasion of the unveiling ("hanging") of (the portrait of) Speaker Arthur Dixon who served from 1963 to 1971.

A PUBLIC 'ANGIN

- by Ted Hinman
(Honourable Edgar W. Hinman
Provincial Treasurer 1955-1964
M.L.A., Cardston 1952-1967
1971-1975)

Today were the day they 'anged Dixon
'T'were not because e'd done wrong
'E were nothing at all like ol' Nixon
But a jolly fine chap all along.

'T'was 'is picture of course they were 'angin
Up 'igh in the parliament 'all
And 'e looked proper 'ansom - real bangin
Lookin down from 'is place on the wall.

T'was all because e'd bin speaker
For quite a great number of years
When times in Alberta were bleaker
With a bit more of blood, sweat, and tears.

'E sat every day in 'is fine 'igh-backed chair
Alookin sedate and benign
'Is decisions of course just 'ad to be fair
Of petulence never a sign

T'were a real borrin job on occasions
On others excitin and rare
But our Arthur by gentle persuasion
Kept order and peace with a flare.

A lookin real grand in 'is three-cornered 'at
And 'is black robe all flowin' and free
'Is collar adorned wi a short white cravat
'Is striped trousers bagged at the knee

'E were a remarkable speaker
Who earned an 'igh place in our 'earts
'E'd never permit any streaker
Displayin unmentionable parts

And if t'were a point of order
On which 'e were called for a rule
E'd send note to 'his clerk and recorder
Who'd studied Beauchesne while at school

If ever there rose a commotion
One side callin t'other bad names
E' quickly dispelled any notion
E'd let the heat burst into flames

So we all find 'im very deservin
Of 'avin is face in a frame
And no one wants any reservin
Of honour or thankin or fame

Then 'ere's a toast to our matee
A wish for a long 'appy life
May 'e stick around 'ere till e's eighty
And join in the fun and the strife.

APPENDIX B

MR. DRAIN'S RESPONSE

The reasoning, of course, behind this is the encroachment of cattle to some degree and the drying off of the grass or whatever particular flora and fauna the game is living off at that particular time. As the weather cycle or the grass cycle or heritage cycle can be a determined to a great degree by the altitude, so there is an area of freshness that attracts the game to higher and higher altitudes because of the drying off impact of the natural processes.

So I would say in conclusion that off-highway vehicles -- I don't regard them as very good hunting vehicles because once the game is spooked you are not going to get anywhere near them with an off-highway vehicle. There may be areas on the prairie where you could possibly run up to a deer or an elk or something like that. But certainly I can't see this being done in the mountains. I cannot see it being done in the hon. member's consituency because of the muskeg, brush and so on. You have to have some semblance of a road in most areas before you can get around.

I certainly endorse the idea expounded by the hon. member on the education of hunters, making them aware of law, and more than that, the realization that conservation is true sportsmanship, that really this is a heritage we should attempt to hand down to future generations.

At one time there was an ideal method, I thought, referring to my own area, of -- I suppose possibly I'm speaking in the manner of one of the blind men who felt one part of the elephant. You can only conclude from what you have seen yourself. I refer to the time when there was a sort of great rapport between the forest officers as such when they lived on the forest reserve, which is something I also endorse, and the game department. But somewhere along the line something happened and there is no longer that same spirit on the part of forest officers toward protecting the game. They have apparently been made aware that this is part of their responsibility but not their direct responsibility. As a consequence thereof, game protection has suffered to a considerable degree.

Another thing that causes people to view with alarm in relation to the scarcity of elk is another process of adaption that the elk have evolved as an answer to heavy hunting pressure. That is the splitting up of elk herds by some common arrangements -- with the elk I assume -- into smaller and smaller groups. One cow elk will take the responsibility of a herd. That's an interesting thing to some people who haven't hunted. It is the cow elk that stands on guard for the herd. She is the one that doesn't go to sleep, but stands there on guard while all the other elk are sleeping in the bush. You can look and you will see the old cow standing there, and if there is one little noise, boy, she's got the herd on the move right now!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Could the hon. member relate his debate to the matter of the amendment which is whether or not the proposed changes in the regulations should be limited to dealing with unsealed firearms.

[redacted]

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to endorse that particular section, but really I was just trying to elucidate in a manner which would add to the general information of the Legislature.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do endorse that. But a thought goes through my mind that the rules of the past will no longer be applicable in the future. Concern for the game will have to be far more paramount if the game is expected to survive. The habitat will have to be protected and the amount of game will be predetermined by the amount of grazing area that they have for winter feeding.

I am thinking of a poem that might have some revelance. If any of you fellows want to suffer along with me, I'll recite it, and if you don't I'll sit down, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Sit down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[redacted] a trackless valley filled with virgin spruce and pine.

I've smoked a pipe on mountains where the very sky seemed mine.
I've wandered through an outland where the rivers were untamed,
Full of countless, chartless rapids that no man has ever tamed.
A wild country, old and shadowed by a past that's living still.
The ancient trees stand rooted where the ancient beasts made kill.
The ancient rocks are splitting raging torrents that have flowed
Since the very dawn of history when the mighty glaciers rode.
I've seen this untouched region and it's facing a retreat,
For earth is man's inheritance, and his breed unlike the rest
Cannot leave it as he finds it, though he finds it at its best.

[Applause]

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my remarks briefly and strictly to the nature of the amendment. I think it could be approached in two ways as some have done, dealing with the motion as amended, as was the case particularly with those who had spoken on the main resolution before, such as the very helpful suggestions -- as always in the area of wildlife -- from the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

I would like him to know, Mr. Speaker, that I am willing to meet him halfway any time on any of these matters, and particularly on the wildlife in his part of this glamorous country of Alberta and Canada. He is a particularly knowledgeable person and his remarks are always helpful.

Speaking strictly to the amendment which would remove the reference to firearms from the main resolution, as proposed by Mr. Zander and seconded by Mr. Trynchy, I think this is a strong amendment for two reasons.

The first reason, Mr. Speaker, is that it broadens the opportunity for discussion on the number of possible ways habitat and other factors in the population of moose and elk -- and this might very well be added for other ungulates as well -- to other possibilities of endangerment which could occur now and in the future and have, perhaps, occurred in the past.

I'd like to offer some more detailed remarks with respect particularly to moose and elk after the House decides on the fate of the amendment itself. But I think in providing that opportunity for a broadened discussion of the moose and elk population, matters, problems, habitat, seasons and so forth, that this amendment is a strong one and a very helpful one for us.

The second reason why I think this is a good amendment and a strong amendment, as proposed by the Member for Athabasca and seconded by the hon. Member for Smoky River, is that it provides an opportunity for members to focus remarks, if they wish, strictly on the question of firearms, even more strictly on the question of unsealed firearms in the green zone, but on the general question of firearms control, of gun control if you like. There were some suggestions during the prior debate, as I reviewed Hansard, and some positions were taken on this matter.

I recall the hon. member, Mr. Ho Lem, suggesting the possible need for a mandatory control on firearms. It's ironic and certainly unrelated, Mr. Speaker, but I understand that that kind of problem is why he is not able to be with us today. But I thought his remarks on that particular issue were very helpful.

As a matter of fact, this second important thing that the amendment does, namely providing an opportunity for members to focus their remarks on matters of firearms problems, questions of gun control, is an opportunity that I really don't think has been fully taken into account by all members because there have been relatively few specific remarks with respect to gun control problems and whether or not there should be additional gun control legislation as it pertains to the hunting of wildlife. I would even at this late date certainly look forward to and invite additional comment in that regard.

I've had strong representations made to me, Mr. Speaker, both ways, even with respect to the suggestion that additional firearms control would lessen our wildlife problems and certain other problems, more vandal-related activities, Mr. Speaker. I have had those strong representations made, yet at the same time I've had the opposite representations made. I think the point was made rather well by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, as a matter of fact, that those who will break the law will do it in any case and that additional firearms legislation, unless accompanied by a very heavy degree of enforcement, would make relatively little difference.

APPENDIX C

MR. AMERONGEN'S DAILY PRAYERS

MONDAYS

LET US PRAY: AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS WEEK WE ASK YOU FATHER TO RENEW AND STRENGTHEN IN US THE AWARENESS OF OUR DUTY AND PRIVILEGE AS MEMBERS OF THIS LEGISLATURE. WE ASK YOU ALSO IN YOUR DIVINE PROVIDENCE, TO BLESS AND PROTECT THE ASSEMBLY AND THE PROVINCE WE ARE ELECTED TO SERVE.

AMEN

WEDNESDAYS

LET US PRAY: OUR FATHER, WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR ABUNDANT BLESSINGS TO OUR PROVINCE AND OURSELVES. WE ASK YOU TO ENSURE TO US YOUR GUIDANCE, AND THE WILL TO FOLLOW IT.

AMEN

FRIDAYS

LET US PRAY: OUR DIVINE FATHER, AS WE CONCLUDE FOR THIS WEEK OUR WORK IN THIS ASSEMBLY, WE RENEW OUR THANKS AND ASK THAT WE MAY CONTINUE OUR WORK UNDER YOUR GUIDANCE.

AMEN

TUESDAYS

LET US PRAY: OUR FATHER KEEP US MINDFUL OF THE SPECIAL AND UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE TO WORK FOR OUR CONSTITUENTS AND OUR PROVINCE AND IN THAT WORK GIVE US STRENGTH AND WISDOM.

AMEN

THURSDAYS

LET US PRAY: OUR FATHER, WE CONFIDENTLY ASK FOR YOUR STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN OUR SERVICE OF YOU THROUGH OUR SERVICE OF OTHERS. WE HUMBLY ASK FOR YOUR GIFT OF WISDOM TO GUIDE US IN MAKING GOOD LAWS AND GOOD DECISIONS FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF ALBERTA.

AMEN

OPENING DAY PRAYER

FATHER, ON THIS DAY OF A NEW BEGINNING WE ASK POR YOUR GUIDANCE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN AND YOUR HELP IN FULFILLING OUR DUTIES. AS MEMBERS OF THIS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MAY WE FAITHFULLY SERVE ALL ALBERTANS, AND IN SERVING THEM, SERVE YOU. AMEN

APPENDIX D

MR. AMERONGEN'S RULING MARCH 11, 1983

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, March 11, 1983

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Statement Concerning Official Opposition

MR. SPEAKER: Election day, November 2, 1982, is the starting point for the first item which concerns this House today. As hon. members know, the election gave rise to two questions. The first was: what adjustments should be made to the four opposition budgets which were passed by the previous Legislative Assembly in the spring of 1982 for the fiscal year we are now in, April 1, 1982, to March 31, 1983? That was solved by, in effect, reallocating funds the Assembly had authorized for an opposition member who was not re-elected and other funds authorized for the former Leader of the Official Opposition. By this means, it was possible to increase the per-member opposition funds substantially for those elected last November 2, so that each would have six and one-half times the amount allotted to each government member. The amounts allotted were less than what had been sought by the newly elected opposition members, but the amounts allocated to each of them represented very substantial increases over what they would have had if the Speaker had not changed the allocations made by the House last spring.

The continuing Speaker, myself, chosen by the previous Legislative Assembly, Alberta's 19th Parliament, could and did deal with the funding question. The recognition of an Official Opposition for this present Legislative Assembly, Alberta's 20th Parliament, is an entirely different matter. The opposition members and I have accepted that until this present Legislative Assembly, which opened yesterday, elected a Speaker, no one could lawfully deal with the question of an Official Opposition in this House. Anyone pretending to make such a decision would have been wasting time. Giving recognition to an Official Opposition in any parliament simply cannot be done until after that parliament is in session.

I am grateful for the helpful and excellent briefs provided by the hon. opposition members. Six of these have come from the Independents; four others, plus a supplement, have been provided by the NDP members. It is plain that none of the hon. members of the opposition regard the matter as being simple. Two of the NDP briefs submitted were each over 120 pages long, including supporting material.

The excellent and thorough research done by the opposition members and their research staffs was augmented by careful work of the research section of the Legislature Library.

A review of over 500 pages of material thus provided shows that no directly applicable precedents or compelling answers have been found in the experience of any of the parliaments of the Commonwealth or in any of our rules or statutes.

In fact there are precedents for not recognizing any Official Opposition. In such a case, of course, there would be no Leader of the Official Opposition. The first question then is: does there need to be such a designation made for and in this House?

There are five reasons why the answer is "yes":

> The Legislative Assembly Act does not in any way make it obligatory to have such a leader, but it assumes that there will be one and provides, for example, for a special salary. Of course, if for any reason there is no such person recognized, then it is impossible to pay the salary. However, to have such a leader can be an advantage to the opposition, or at least to that part of it that may be recognized as the Official Opposition.
>
> I am assuming that during the term of this Legislative Assembly, an electoral boundaries commission will be appointed. The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act requires that two members of such a commission be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.
>
> Our rules of procedure, which we call the *Standing Orders*, also mention such a leader several times and imply that there will be a person holding that office.
>
> Under our *Standing Orders*, the time limit for speeches by the Leader of the Opposition is 90 minutes instead of 30. If no one is recognized as holding that office, the opposition will lose that additional debating time.
>
> The Leader of the Opposition has the right to designate some items of Assembly business for special attention or priority. Without such a leader, the opposition may lose those opportunities.

It is clear that if any reasonable basis can be found to recognize an Official Opposition and its leader, that should be done.

All opposition members agree that the question of recognition is a duty of the Speaker. It is not a government matter, nor a political or party matter. It is true that in Alberta prior to 1970, once or possibly twice the government seems to have become involved when there was a question of amending the Legislative Assembly Act to divide or change the amount of the opposition leader's special honorarium. Apart from those very rare exceptions, it appears that whenever the question has arisen, it has been a matter for the Speaker to deal with.

It is a question of a status within a parliament. Hence a determination should, if at all possible, be based on circumstances within the Assembly.

No precedent or rule has been discovered or given to me where the designation of an Official Opposition has been based on circumstances outside a parliament. However, given the need to make such a decision, it does seem advisable that if factors within these four walls do not provide a solution, one must go outside for an answer based on well-known facts.

Our hon. colleagues the Independents have emphasized that the decision must be made mainly on the basis of incumbency and continuity. Their argument says, in effect, that since the hon. Member for Little Bow was Leader of the Opposition in the 19th Legislative Assembly, he is now an incumbent. Hence, the Independents conclude that where no other opposition group is larger than the one a former opposition leader leads, there is no one to replace him and, on the basis of continuity, he is still to be recognized as Leader of the Official Opposition. However, no precedent shows that incumbency or conti-

nuity has been the deciding factor, or any real factor at all, in recognizing an opposition leader.

There are, of course, examples where an opposition leader in one parliament has been recognized in the next. In each such example, there were reasons other than incumbency or continuity for the renewed recognition. The briefs and research do not show that a person became leader of an opposition by reason only of having been the leader previously.

If there were an incumbency rule, it would have to apply to individual members and the positions they previously held. However, we are dealing with recognition of a group. That is so because all the Speaker can really do is to recognize an Official Opposition; it is up to that group to designate its own leader. Hence, the incumbency or continuity argument would have to be stretched to say that an incumbency held by three members of a party in the last House continues to be held by two members who are not of a party in this House.

Another argument by the Independents that may be said to be in-House goes under the name of seniority. The reasoning under this heading is that where there is no other way of deciding who may lead the opposition, one must count the number of years of service as a member and give the nod to the member with longer service. This overlooks the essential that group recognition comes first and leader recognition is the decision of that group. Longer serving members are often given special deference in our parliaments, but that deference is not a basis for rights. Seniority does not, in our parliaments, confer the acknowledged rights or pre-eminence that it may command in elected Houses south of our border.

A third in-House factor could be the declaration signed by the two Independent members that they will work as a team. At the most, this could have the effect only of making the two opposition teams equal in the Assembly.

There is an argument submitted by the hon. members of the NDP based on a section of the Legislative Assembly Act which deals with a "recognized party". However, the recognized party concept does not apply at all. Firstly, the Legislative Assembly Act requires that there be a minimum of four members in a recognized party. Secondly, a recognized party is a second opposition group, over and above an Official Opposition.

Then there is a further argument by the NDP members based on the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act. The NDP organization, outside the House, is a registered party under that Act. However, that Act says absolutely nothing about what goes on in the Legislative Assembly. Instead it regulates the collecting, donating, and spending of money for political purposes.

None of the research has indicated any Act or rule which would provide a reasonable basis for a decision in the present circumstances.

A still further suggestion by the NDP members is that customarily an Official Opposition is composed of elected members of a party. That does indeed appear to be the case. During the period of service of my predecessor in this Chair, the Rev. Peter Dawson, some Independent members did in fact constitute the Official Opposition in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Their leader was recognized as the Leader of the Opposition. A great deal of material from the *Journals*, newspapers, and other sources was submitted to help establish whether or not the Independent members in those days were in fact members of a political party. It does appear that in many ways the Independent movement, as it was sometimes called, acted as a political party. The NDP argument, then, is that where there is an equality in numbers, as there is here, between two groups each claiming the designation, it should go to that group whose members belong to the same party.

It does seem that the limited validity of that idea must be recognized. It is limited because if there were within this House a majority team in the opposition composed of Independents, there is simply no question that that team would have the right to be designated as the Official Opposition, regardless of whether its elected members belonged to any party.

One ought to hesitate to make a decision in this matter on the narrow point just mentioned. There is, however, a circumstance outside the Assembly which also has some significance in relation to work done inside the Assembly. It is this: party organizations outside the Assembly are known to assist members with their work in the Assembly. In the present case, that also must be taken into account because of the equal numbers of the two opposition teams in this House.

Then there is the so-called popular vote argument. It can be verified by the figures published by the Chief Electoral Officer that the NDP candidates throughout the province garnered in the last election almost as many votes as all the other non-PC candidates combined. This argument is somewhat overstated, however, when a claim is made that all those who voted for the candidates of a certain party throughout the province are represented by the candidates of that party who were elected.

It must be recognized that many voters vote for a candidate rather than for a party. Obvious examples are the members of this House who were elected as Independents, without party ties. Another very clear example is that of our former colleague Mr. Gordon Taylor. He has retained his support and has been successful whether he ran as a Social Crediter, an Independent, or a Progressive Conservative.

If as MLAs we represent only those people who voted for us or for our respective parties, then that must necessarily mean that no one represents those who voted for parties that elected no candidates: the Liberals, Social Credit, WCC, or ARM. There's little doubt that every member of this House would reject the notion that she or he does not represent all of his or her constituents.

Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that in many instances, voters who belong to or support a party may prefer to go with their concerns to elected members of that party.

Given the need to designate an Official Opposition so that its leader may serve as Leader of the Official Opposition, and given also the equality in numbers between the teams seeking the designation and for the reasons mentioned above, I recognize the hon. members for Spirit River-Fairview and Edmonton Norwood as the Official Opposition, at least for the time being, in this 20th Legislative Assembly.

I say "for the time being" only because this choice stands on a narrow base. A significant change of circumstances within the House could easily compel a change in that recognition. The hon. members I have just referred to have fairly acknowledged, in their brief of November 15, 1982, that a change in numbers might necessarily require a change in designation. They said: "Numerical superiority would provide adequate argument for a group of Independent Members forming the Official Opposition". Clearly this is so.

Just as the Independents have indicated that their leader would be the hon. Member for Little Bow, so too the

NDP members have indicated that their leader is the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. Therefore, I have the honor to recognize now my colleague the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview as the Leader of the Official Opposition.

It has seemed necessary, in this statement and in reaching this conclusion, to deal somewhat at length with the reasoning given by both sides and to indicate that their seriously and carefully worked out briefs, the last of which is dated February 15, 1983, were given serious and careful consideration. In fact, material prepared under neutral auspices reached me as recently as a few days ago, and a review of all the material prior to writing this statement was completed less than 72 hours ago. For reasons given above, and apparently accepted, it would have been quite wrong to have made a ruling earlier and before having been re-elected Speaker of this Assembly. Yet it was essential to prepare beforehand to make this statement early in this new period of service in Alberta's Parliament.

The statement I have just read does not diminish in any way the high regard and respect I have for the hon. members for Little Bow and Clover Bar. Their dedicated and impressive public service to their constituencies and our province are well known. I am sure that all of my colleagues in this Assembly share with me these sentiments of high regard and respect.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity today to table for members of the Assembly a copy of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis. I have copies for all hon. members.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor to table the annual report of Alberta Disaster Services for the year ended March 31, 1982.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor to table today the ninth annual report of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor to file with the Legislature the Klufas Report on Services to Disabled Persons.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file the manifest of Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services aircraft, with respect to air travel of the Executive Council and government agencies for the 1982 calendar year.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table annual reports for the following: the Department of Culture, the Glenbow museum, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, and the Alberta Art Foundation.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file an exchange of correspondence between the presidents of the Metis associations of Alberta and the Premier of Alberta, regarding aboriginal rights issues.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: May I respectfully draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of our distinguished former colleague Mr. Robert Clark.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly, members of the Lethbridge-Coaldale 4-H Beef Club. Nineteen eighty-three marks the 60th anniversary of continuous service to the community by this club. Although other clubs were established earlier, no club in Alberta has provided continuous service longer than the Lethbridge-Coaldale 4-H Beef Club. This is due in part, Mr. Speaker, to the very dedicated support and interest shown by parents of the club members. That's exemplified today by the fact that many of the parents are accompanying their sons and daughters to our Legislative Assembly.

The leadership provided to the club has also been drawn primarily from parents, as well as other interested parties in the community. I would like to pay special tribute to the leader, Mr. Jerry Kuejer, and the assistant leaders, Arnold Bodie, Mrs. Joyce Gergely, Ted Gergely, and Hank Koot.

I now ask members of the club, their leaders and parents to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the Alberta Legislative Assembly, a group of 37 young and bright grades 6 and 9 bilingual students from the J.E. LaPoint school in Beaumont, located in the Wetaskiwin-Leduc constituency. They are seated in the members gallery and are accompanied by their group leader, Mr. Sherban, and Mr. Plamondon and Mr. Lavigne. I ask that they all stand and receive a welcome from this Assembly.

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly a group of 48 grade 6 students from Westboro elementary school in the hamlet of Sherwood Park. Accompanied by their group leader, Josh Carlson, and by teachers Brenda Smith and Edna Dach, they are seated in the public gallery. I now ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Department of Agriculture

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I have an important ministerial statement, on a most complex issue, which I would like to present to the Assembly today. The Hon. Hugh Planche, Minister of Economic Development, and I generally accept the federal government's understanding of the need for a comprehensive approach to action on western rail capacity, grain handling, and transportation. We view the federal policy proposal as a necessary first step towards continued agricultural growth and economic development in Alberta. However, there are a number of key issues that have yet to be satisfactorily resolved and must be in the legislation.

We are concerned with the federal government's future cost-sharing arrangements on inflation. It is not reasonable to expect farmers to commit, in 1983, to being

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